

WASHINGTON – Today, Committee on House Administration Democrats opted to ignore the severe voting impediments that disenfranchise thousands of military personnel overseas, and instead vote on a measure that would provide states federal grants for providing backup paper ballots in emergency situations – something states are already doing.

The backup ballot legislation (H.R. 5803), introduced by Elections Subcommittee Chair Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., authorizes the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to administer \$75 million in grants to states for offering backup ballots to voters during emergency situations. However, according to a recent [survey conducted by the Election Center](#), a vast majority of states already provide such ballots to voters. Of the 42 states that responded to the survey, 39 currently provide paper or backup paper ballots in the event of machine failures. California, Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Utah and Virginia did not participate in the survey.

After today's markup, GOP members of the Committee expressed their disappointment with the Committee's failure to address real problems facing voters both at home and overseas. The Committee's Ranking Republican Vern Ehlers, R-Mich., noted that voter education and [military voting impediments](#)

should take priority over Lofgren's measure to reimburse states for existing programs. "There are areas of election reform where there are demonstrated needs that are not being met, and where money is not being committed," Ehlers stated. "While I appreciate any effort to support states in carrying out their responsibilities to effectively administer federal elections, H.R. 5803 provides a solution to a non-existent problem. Our nation's local election officials are already taking care of the problems H.R. 5803 pretends to solve."

After voting against all six amendments proposed by GOP members, Committee Democrats forced the bill through Committee on a 5-3 party-line vote.

For more information, please contact the Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.